

## Find God One Need Not Go To the Ways Of Wickedness

Manasseh of Old Sought and Found the Lord in the True Way and Men of Today Need Not Seek Differently.

By Rev. JOHN E. ABBOTT, Pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Text, 11 Chron. 33; 12. "Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God." MANASSEH had a good chance to have learned that before, and in a way and time that would have brought better results to his own life and greater blessing to his age. For Manasseh had a good father. Every stage of his career was marked by the signs of goodness. In the first year of the first month of his reign as king of Judah he opened the doors of the house of the Lord, set the priests in their courses and called the people back to the worship that they had neglected. Next in order, he broke down the altars in the groves and upon the high places where the children of Israel were engaging in the same wicked orgies for which God had driven out the heathen. In time of warfare he trusted in God instead of alliance with heathen nations. And when Hezekiah was dead, they wrote in the brief chronicle a mention of his goodness. So Manasseh had a chance to unfold like a beautiful flower in the sunlight of the knowledge and the love of God.

When Paul wrote to Timothy he said, "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Polycarp, who is spoken of as one of the Christian fathers, wrote the same mark upon the religious thought of the ages when he was nine years of age. He, too, Dudley Tyndal, whose dying words gave the inspiration for the hymn "Stand up, Stand up for Jesus," from the age of six years manifested a pronounced piety. Her Joseph O'Connell wrote the song "Ashamed of Jesus," when he was a boy under 16 years of age. That was better, the best way to learn to know God is in youth, through the love and goodness of God and the joy and exuberance of life.

**How to Find God.**

We do not have to go the way of wickedness, and find sorrow and grief and ruin in order to find God. Many would make the conclusion from this fact that we must find God the way they would reach Manasseh's goodness, life and then of his conversion, and would say "That is the ideal way to get genuine religion."

A young man once said to me that he thought the best preaching and up-lifters of the public were the men that had "rubbed up with the world and learned something about its sin from their own experience." He said to him: "Do you mean that you think every man ought to be given a course in debauchery as a preparation for his life work?" He replied: "Well, I did not intend to put it that way, but that is about the size of it." My friends, it is the devil's lie! As we know that the physician ought to have the small-pox and cholera and bubonic plague and tuberculosis in order to treat these diseases sympathetically and successfully. As well say to the doctor who has been summoned to set a broken arm, "If you have not had your arm broken, we do not want you." Many a man knows about the laws of life, and the evil of sin, and the way of salvation and of real strength of character who has not learned through revolting personal experience with sin. A recent article in a popular magazine speaks of the uselessness of sanatorium. There is a popular notion that when you go off to the seashore or to the mountains, you must get a good coat of tan. It is a mistaken notion. The tan is only a skin disease. To protect itself by depositing a brown pigment in the skin. You could have the same protection by wearing a broad brimmed hat and covering the neck and arms with clothing. So there is a notion that people are stronger when tanned and scorched by sin. It is not true. Such scars do not speak of moral health, but only of the immoral ex-

posure. The man does not live who would not be better off without them. Much is done by the promiscuous relating of shady and interpretive events. Men who have been reclaimed sometimes picture their past misdeeds with the skill of artists and the touch of the pen. The young, their dissipations seem very romantic and attractive, and the youthful reformation seems very noble and heroic. It does not matter how low you live, you can "settle down" and shine as a glorious sun of the morning whenever you get ready. Alas! It does not work. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord, he was God. How much better it would have been if he had known it earlier.

But it is encouraging to know that he did find God even through his hard experience. He found God when a sense of desperate need drove him to God. He never saw the stars of hope until he got to the bottom of the shaft of his own life. We are glad that even then he found God. We may say that there were three things that confirmed him in the knowledge that the Lord is God.

**Sin Brings Its Consequences.**

First, he discovered for a certainty that sin brings its consequences. See what its consequences were to him, as shown in verse 11 of this chapter, "Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the plagues of the host of the king of Assyria, and took Manasseh among the thorns and bound him with fetters and carried him to Babylon. He was captured hiding in the brush like a common fugitive and carried like a slave to a foreign city. Manasseh got caught, and then he repented. His repentance was genuine too. We sometimes speak slurringly of the man who does not repent till he gets caught, but we argue that that is evidence that his penitence is not genuine. But does it not often happen that a man is not certainly convinced of the inexcusableness of moral law until he does get caught? And people fail to believe that there is a God in heaven when they do not apprehend that moral law is inexorable.

Men persuade themselves that they will be exceptions, that they can play with the fire and not get burned, that they can play with the asp of sin and not get stung. The very benevolence of nature, her quickness to forgive and repair, especially in youth, misleads them into believing that they can transgress forever and suffer. People do not know God when they are in that frame of mind. That will have to be broken up first of all. When by bitter experience a man discovers that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," then he also perceives that sin is not good, and if he will follow that thread, he will soon know that he Lord, he is God.

**God Merciful to Pardon.**

Second, he found that God was merciful to pardon and help in his moral distress. Verse 12 says, "And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers—and he was entreated of him and heard his supplication." In the record in the chronicles of the kings mention was made of how God was entreated of Manasseh. So David said: "I was brought low and he helped me." So the prodigal son fell at his father's feet with broken heart and confession of his sin, and the father lifted him up and kissed away his words of sorrow. So will he do for all. A young man who was living wrong and upon whose face there were the marks of dissipation, was walking along a suburban street, and he saw a citizen. He was thinking of his life, and disgusted with his sin. From a neighboring balcony covered with vines, he heard a young woman's voice singing, "Jesus sought me when a stranger, Wandering from the fold of God; He, to rescue me from danger, Interposed His precious blood."

Our attitude toward Calvary's cross (not the pieces of wood, but what it stands for) will determine our destiny in the days to come. For the cross typifies God's sacrifice and love for a lost world.—Rev. C. W. Wedell of Trinity Methodist church.

Jesus comes to each of us asking us to receive him by faith in giving him the homage of our hearts and the possession of our lives. Shall we accept him with joyful songs of adoring praise, or reject him with gloomy, silent, stubborn unbelief.—Rev. H. P. Bond of the East El Paso Methodist church.

"Thy candlestick shall be removed, and thy light go out," the rebuking message to the rich and prosperous, but spiritless church of Ephesus, is a warning note to the busy and prosperous but visionless church of today.—Rev. Chas. L. Overstreet of First Presbyterian church.

The most responsible duty a man has is to faithfully exercise his right of franchise. The good men of Texas who have failed so to do, and not the demagogues in politics, are responsible for the unfit men in office in city and state.—Rev. A. E. Boyd of Highland Park Baptist church.

Climb to the heights, live on the mountain tops, broaden your vision and breathe the life giving atmosphere of higher aim and nobler thought.—Rev. Kenneth Brown of East El Paso Presbyterian church.

Many people will see in the present situation of wars and rumors of wars the end of time approaching. But we are expressly told that the end shall come as a thief in the night. If providence shall overrule the wars in Europe for the breaking up of the great military establishments and the ushering in of universal peace, it will be a long stride toward the millennium.—Rev. W. C. Baber of the Altira Presbyterian church.

The present war scare in Europe is a preliminary to the great struggle over the ruins of the Turkish empire that will ere long involve every nation and culminate in the battle of Armageddon and the second coming of Jesus Christ.—Burt Bray of the Seventh Day Adventist tabernacle.

No service which we render is so sure of reward as the service we render for God; even death cannot rob us of the reward for such service.—Rev. J. H. Allen of Austin Park Christian church.

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He stopped and listened. He had long known those lines, but tonight they spoke to him as they never said before. He went to his room, and upon his knees, he made manly confession of his sins, and God heard his prayer and raised him up into a new life. If you get into trouble call upon God, and he will answer you.

**Making the World Different.**

Third, he found that a changed attitude brought a changed world. Soon as he repented he was brought back to Jerusalem. Isaiah pictures the mountains and hills as breaking forth into singing and all the trees of the field as clapping their hands to a redeemed and forgiven people. You think everything is the matter with your world. The trouble is with yourself. Your world is your echo. Get right with God and your world will be different, the air will be full of God's forces fighting for you. Before you leave this subject fix your gaze upon one word—but.

But there were many who shared the evil of Manasseh's experience only. The people who had followed him in his wickedness only partially followed him in his reform. They stopped worshipping idols in the groves and high places, but they continued to worship him in the forbidden places. His son, Simon, did evil as did his father, but did not repent like him. To this day men justify their evil course by David's sin, but they do not repent in bitterness, as David repented. A young man who had been a very sinful man, but who had been converted and was dying, said, "O bury my influence with me, but it can't be done; it is laid aside like the seeds and lies on the field. Though God forgives, remember that your life and the world is worse off for your sin."

**First Presbyterian.**

First Presbyterian church at Boulevard and Stanton streets, Rev. C. L. Overstreet, pastor. The services Sunday follow: Sabbath school at 9:30 a. m. Morning worship at 10:30 a. m. Sermon by the pastor. Thos. Christian will sing "Fear Not Ye O Israel," Buck, Francis Moore will be at the organ. The Y. P. S. C. E. will meet at 4:30 p. m. The congregation will participate in the opening services in Cleveland square at 7:30 in the evening.

**Altira Presbyterian.**

At the Altira Presbyterian church, corner 10th and Russell streets, Grand View, Rev. W. C. Baber, pastor, the usual services will be held Sunday. There will be preaching by the pastor at 11 a. m. and 3 p. m. Morning subject: "How a Great Church Does Nothing," evening subject: "What the Scriptures Mean by War and Rumors of War and the End." Sunday school at 9:45 a. m. Leonard West, superintendent.

**East El Paso Presbyterian.**

At the East El Paso Presbyterian church, corner Poplar and Texas streets, Rev. Kenneth Brown, pastor, services on Sunday will be: Morning service at 11 o'clock, sermon by the pastor, subject: "Mountain Top Experiences." There will be no services on Sunday night.

**West El Paso Sunday School.**

At the West El Paso Sunday school, barracks at old Fort Bliss, J. L. Vaughan, superintendent, Sunday school is held at 2 p. m.

**First Methodist.**

At the First Methodist Episcopal church, corner Myrtle avenue and Ochoa street, Rev. Herman G. Porter, pastor, the pastor will preach at both morning and evening services Sunday. The services will be: Morning worship at 11 o'clock, sermon by Mrs. Ralph J. Wilson and Mrs. Elizabeth E. Cole, by E. E. Noid; sermon by the pastor; evening worship at 8 o'clock; Sunday school at 9:45 a. m. Epworth League at 7:15 p. m. A get-together social will be held at the church next Wednesday at 8 p. m.

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## ARRANGING FOR ANNUAL MEETING OF TEXAS SYNOD

Executive Committee of the Board of Home Missions to Meet on Tuesday.

The executive committee of the Presbyterian board of home missions of the synod of Texas will hold a conference in the First Presbyterian church Tuesday afternoon and evening. The committee is composed of Rev. R. Hodges of Temple, Tex., and Rev. E. T. Gorman of Amarillo, Tex., and Rev. A. P. Bishop, D. D. of Austin, Rev. Robt. McLean, D. D. of Los Angeles, and Rev. C. L. Overstreet will confer with the committee.

**Plan for Synod.**

Friday evening in the parlors of the First Presbyterian church, Messrs. E. A. Shelton, A. G. Foster, H. B. Durkee and Rev. C. L. Overstreet met to make the preliminary arrangements for the coming meeting of the synod of Texas, which will meet in the First Church of the Synod, October 7-11 inclusive. Sub-committees were appointed to look after the details of the entertainment of this body. In addition to the synod meeting, the Woman's Synod society will hold its sessions in El Paso at the same time. There will be over 200 delegates present from all over the state and a number of prominent speakers of the country will be here for the various sessions.

**Open Air Services.**

The Cleveland square Sunday evening services will continue through the month of August. The services have been conducted by Rev. P. J. Rice of the First Christian church and Rev. Chas. L. Overstreet of the First Presbyterian together with the generous help of their respective congregations. The meeting Sunday evening begins at 7:30 and the sermon will be preached by Rev. Chas. L. Overstreet. The White male quartet will sing special selections.

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